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ABSTRACT

In 1998, researchers were requested to undertake an evaluation of a proposed new behavior program at the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre. The behavior management program at the Centre attempts to intervene constructively in the lives of young offenders. The project aims to increase the range of skills for management of clients' behaviors in a fair, respectful, and rewarding environment; encourage clients to become accountable for their actions; change client relationships to authority; and maximize young people's abilities to transfer positive learning to the community. The hypothesis is that increased capacity for reflection will facilitate the taking of greater responsibility for thoughts, feelings, decisions, and actions. The evaluation focused on identifying the expectations that clients, staff, and management had for the project; assessing the impact the project had on clients, staff, management, and the environment in the units; and formulating recommendations. Evaluation of the pilot project indicates that participants generally did change in the direction of the hypothesis, and that further work needs to be done to consolidate the changes in management style and to ensure that changes in participants continue into the community. (JDM)

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Working Paper 20

Evaluation of the Behaviour Management Program at the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre

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INTRODUCTION

Abstract

Evaluation of the Behaviour Management Program at the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre

The behaviour management program at the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre (MJJC) attempts to intervene constructively in the lives of young offenders. It expects a lot from staff as well as program participants. The hypothesis is that increased capacity for reflection will facilitate the taking of greater responsibility for thoughts, feelings, decisions and actions. Evaluation of the pilot project indicated that participants generally did change in the direction of the hypothesis and that further work needs to be done to consolidate the changes in management style and to ensure that changes in participants continue into the community.

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Contents

Introduction 5

Aims of the Evaluation 5

Research Methodology 6

Stages in Data Collection 7

Stage One: March 1998 - April 1998 7

Attitudes, Expectations and Unit Environment Prior to the Project Commencing 7

Stage Two: April 1998 - May 1998 8

Attitudes, Experiences and the Unit's Environment During the Project 8

Stage Three: Sept 1998 - Oct 1998 8

Attitudes, Outcomes and the Unit Environment at the Conclusion of the Project 8

Stage Four: Dec 1998-March 1999 9

Analysis of Quantitative Data 9

Data Analysis Summary 11

Stage One: Themes 11

Management and Health Team Interview Themes 11

Staff Interview Themes 13

Client Interview Themes 13

John Bergman Interview Themes 13

Observations by Researchers as Participants 13

Stage Two: Implementation 15

Staff Interview Themes 15

Client Interview Themes 15

John Bergman Interview Themes 15

Observations by Researchers as Participants 15

Stage Three: Follow-up Training 16

Management and Health Team Interview Themes 16

Staff Interview Themes 16

Client Interview Themes 17

John Bergman Interview Themes 17

Observations by Researchers as Participants 17

Stage Four: Analysis of Quantitative Data 19

The Moos Correctional Institutions Environment Scale 19

Incident Reports 23

Staff Absences 25

Conclusions and Recommendations **27**

1. The chosen method of change 27
2. Resourcing change 27
3. The process of change 28
4. Unit management change 28
5. Evaluating change **28**

References **29**

List of Tables

Table 1. Moos Institutional Climate Scale - Mean Scores 20

Table 2. Number of Staff Absence Days by Month (1998) 25

Introduction

In early 1998 the researchers were requested by the management of the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre to undertake an evaluation of a proposed new behaviour management program in the Eastern Hill unit at the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre.

The project aimed to: increase the range of skills for management of client behaviours in a fair, respectful and rewarding environment; encourage clients to become accountable and responsible for their actions; change client relationships to authority and society; and maximise young people's abilities to transfer positive learning to the community.

The evaluation focussed on identifying the expectations that clients, staff and management had for the project; assessing the impact the project had on clients, staff, management and the environment in the unit; and formulating recommendations which would contribute to the development of unit management techniques at Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre.

The significance of the MJJC project lay in its difference from most treatment and other types of intervention programs with young offenders. The MJJC project focussed on increasing staff skills at least as much as it is on an assumption of personal deficit in the young offender. It could therefore be expected that staff and clients would share responsibility for outcomes. It was envisaged that evaluation of this project may be important for future program development in Juvenile Justice Centres and possibly in other types of correctional settings.

Aims of the Evaluation

The purpose of the research project was to evaluate the Juvenile Justice Management Program implemented at Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre. The specific aims of the evaluation were to:

- Identify the expectations that clients, management, youth officers, teachers, specialist staff and the facilitator had for the project;
- Establish the positive and negative outcomes of the project for all those involved in implementing and participating in the project;
- Monitor the implementation of the project;
- Assess the impact that the project had on the environment in the Unit;
- Review changes in management procedures in the Unit;
- Assess the impact the project had on client behaviour both during the project and up to three months after;

- Monitor the impact of the project on client and staff morale;

- Formulate recommendations which would contribute to the development of Unit management techniques at MJJC and other Youth Residential Centres in Victoria;

- Produce a report of key findings and recommendations for distribution to personnel and clients at MJJC; relevant government departments; and funding agencies such as the Children in Residential Centres Program. It was expected that this report would facilitate an understanding of the project and analyse its effectiveness in facilitating changes in the management of young people;

- Convene a seminar at the conclusion of the evaluation to provide a forum for professionals working in the area to discuss the outcomes and implications of the research for policy and practice.

Research Methodology

The evaluation was undertaken using an action-oriented process. Given that the project was already in its early stages when the evaluation team was brought together, the selected evaluation model was viewed by the researchers as the most appropriate for capturing the evolving nature and design of the project. It enabled the researchers to monitor and assess key areas relating to the project as it developed over time. The aims and objectives of the evaluation were developed from a series of focus group meetings between the researchers and key personnel from the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre.

The primary setting for this research was the Eastern Hill Unit. This maximum-security unit had, prior to the program, earnt a reputation for being the 'rough' and 'tough' unit, where clients 'fought' out their sentence, only to return time and time again.

The sample group consisted of clients, youth workers, unit managers and service staff involved with the Eastern Hill Unit prior to and during the project. Managerial staff from the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre also formed part of the sample group and were chosen on the basis of their participation in the development and/or implementation of the project. It was considered important that youth workers and unit managers employed within the Unit prior to the commencement of the project would be included in Stage 1 of the research to gain a knowledge and understanding of the culture and environment within the Unit prior to the commencement of the project.

Given the nature and sensitivity of the research, a variety of research methods were employed. Qualitative research methods were used in order to gain detailed information and insights from the clients, youth workers, unit managers, specialist staff, the Chief Executive Officer of Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre and the facilitator, John Bergman.

The specific qualitative techniques which were used included participant observation, semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Quantitative research methods were also employed and included an adaptation of the Moos Correctional Institution Climate Scale to assess the changes in the Unit's environment; the analysis of incident reports and staff absences prior to, during and after the project; and the analysis of Eastern Hill client records prior to, during and after the project.

In addition, a range of documentary material was also examined and analysed. Documentary material included: the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Operational Procedures Manual; staff selection criteria; minutes of Eastern Hill Unit staff meetings; minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings; training material and related documents; and Eastern Hill client information packs.

All clients and personnel participating in the project were invited to participate in the evaluation via a letter from the researchers. The participants were advised that their participation in the evaluation would be strictly voluntary and that they could withdraw from the project at any time. The privacy of the participants was maintained throughout the evaluation and all names or identifying characteristics have been changed in this report to ensure the anonymity of participants. All the clients and personnel who were involved in the project fully supported the evaluation and provided information and facilitation for this research.

Stages in Data Collection

Stage One: March 1998 - April 1998

Attitudes, Expectations and Unit Environment Prior to the Project Commencing

1.1 A focus group meeting was held with key staff members and members of the Steering Group Committee to determine the expectations, intended outcomes and concerns for the project and its evaluation.

1.2 Participant observation of the daily organisation and management of the Eastern Hill Unit ad daily management of its clients' behaviours prior to the commencement of the project was undertaken.

1.3 Questionnaires were administered to existing clients, youth officers and unit managers from the Eastern Hill Unit, specialist staff, and senior management prior to the commencement of the project, and to the new youth officers and unit managers selected to participate in the project. Open-ended questionnaires provided specific insights into participants' expectations, hopes and concerns for the project.

1.4 A simplified version of the Moos Correctional Institution Environment Scale was administered to existing clients, youth officers and unit managers from the Eastern Hill Unit, specialist staff, and senior management prior to the commencement of the project. The original Moos Correctional Environment Scale measures the social climate of correctional institutions on three dimensions: relationships within the institution (involvement, support and expressiveness); treatment programs (autonomy, practical orientation, personal problem orientation); and, system maintenance (order and organisation, clarity and staff control). The simplified version used in this evaluation project simply sought to obtain an overall objective measure of change in climate over time.

1.5 Interviews were conducted with existing clients, youth officers and unit managers from the Eastern Hill Unit, specialist staff, senior management, new youth officers and unit managers selected to participate in the project, and the facilitator, John Bergman. In - depth issues were discussed relating to the implementation and outcomes of the project.

1.6 Incident reports six months prior to the commencement of the project were collated and analysed in order to identify and assess the seriousness and frequency of incidents and the nature of the punishment given, prior to the commencement of the project.

1.7 Rates of staff absence three months prior to the commencement of the project were analysed in order to assess staff absenteeism prior to the commencement of the project.

1.8 Documents relating to the planning, development and implementation of the project were collected and collated.

Stage Two: April 1998 - May 1998

Attitudes, Experiences and the Unit's Environment During the Project

2.1 Participant observation of the training sessions conducted by the facilitator, John Bergman with the youth workers and unit managers selected for the project, specialised staff, and senior management from Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre. These observations provided thorough insights into the nature of the training and participants reactions to it.

2.2 Participant observation of the training sessions conducted by the facilitator, John Bergman with the clients, youth workers and unit managers selected for the project within the Eastern Hill Unit. These observations provided thorough insights into the practical application of the training in the Unit and participants' reactions to it.

2.3 Interviews were conducted with clients, youth workers and unit managers from the Eastern Hill Unit as well as the facilitator, John Bergman. These interviews encouraged participants to discuss the positive and negative outcomes of the project, their concerns and the difficulties that they had experienced to date.

2.4 The simplified form of the Moos Correctional Institutional Environment Scale was administered to clients, youth workers and unit managers in the Eastern Hill Unit.

2.5 Participant observation of the daily organisation and maintenance of the Eastern Hill Unit and management of client behaviours during and after the training program. These observations provided insights into the impact of the project on the environment in the Unit; the management of client behaviours; and, on the positive and negative outcomes of the project for those involved.

Stage Three: Sept 1998 - Oct 1998

Attitudes, Outcomes and the Unit Environment at the Conclusion of the Project

3.1 Participant observation of the daily organisation and maintenance of the unit, and the management of client behaviours were conducted prior to follow-up training.

3.2 The simplified form of the Moos Correctional Institutional Environment Scale was administered to clients, youth workers and unit mangers from the Eastern Hill Unit, specialised staff, and senior management. The results were analysed and compared with the results obtained in Stages One and Two.

3.3 Interviews were conducted with clients, youth workers and unit managers from the Eastern Hill Unit, specialised staff, senior management, and the faciliotator, John Bergman, to gain a more thorough understanding of the difficulties and positive outcomes they had experienced of the project.

3.4 Participant observation of the follow-up training sessions held by the facilitator, John Bergman, with clients, unit staff and unit managers in the Eastern Hill Unit.

Stage Four: Dec 1998-March 1999

Analysis of Quantitative Data

4.1 Incident Reports during the training and six months after the training were collated. Key variables were developed from the Unit's incident reports and data were consolidated to an electronic database. Data were analysed in order to assess the seriousness and frequency of the incidents occurring, and the nature of punishment given. These data were then compared with incident data six months prior to the commencement of the project.

4.2 Rates of staff absence six months after the training were collated, analysed and compared with staff absences three months prior to the commencement of the project.

4.3 Documentary material, including the Operational Procedures Manual, staff rosters, staff selection criteria, minutes of Unit staff meetings, minutes of Steering Committee meetings, and training material, was analysed.

4.4 Client records were examined and analysed to ascertain whether any clients participating in the project had, after their release, reoffended and returned to the institution.

4.5 Taped interviews from Stages One, Two and Three were transcribed and all names and identifying characteristics coded to ensure the anonymity and privacy of participants. Interview data were analysed using an open coding process. This process allowed for key themes and issues to be identified in the data. Using key themes derived from the data, five significant categories of analysis were developed: the problems in process; positive and negative outcomes; expected and unexpected change; recommendations and other areas of concern or interest. Data were coded according to these categories and major themes noted.

4.6 The Moos Correctional Institution Environment Scale from Stages One, Two and Three were scored and client and staff ratings of the 'climate' of Eastern Hill were compared.

Data Analysis Summary

Stage One: Themes

Management and Health Team Interview Themes

Management and Health team staff interviewed were very enthusiastic and committed to the project. There was general agreement that key people had really worked extremely hard 'and beyond the call of duty' to develop the project and convince others of its importance.

Staff saw this as an opportunity to 'change practices in working with young people', 'challenge young people's offending behaviour,' 'increase opportunities for clients to learn and develop ways of managing situations and themselves' and 'develop healthy good practices in the institution and safe passage through the system'.

There was a universal view that whilst there had been considerable growth and development in the other units in the Centre that Eastern Hill had been slow to change. The leadership, programs practices were further institutionalising young people rather than challenging their behaviour and providing them with the foundations to take responsibility for their own actions.

Whilst it was obvious that interviewees had very little knowledge of the new program directions nor the content of the training sessions that were about to take place, there was quite a remarkable faith that John Bergman would somehow provide the necessary directions and skills.

All the staff interviewed had a very clear understanding of the reasons for the development of the project. All believed that whilst change had been ongoing in the institution over the previous five years and it was time to take the next important step forward . It was agreed however that staff, at all levels, needed guidance and training into how to deal with offending behaviour.

The project was proposed, John Bergman was approached to run the training session, staff were selected for the new unit and then the decision was made that Eastern Hill would be the site for the project. This decision was not taken lightly in fact people commented on how difficult it had been. However, all the members of the management and health teams interviewed were unanimous in their support for the decision. They all believed that the tense atmosphere, the militaristic and punitive punishment regime, the inconsistency between the expected staff management style and the macho atmosphere of in the unit, warranted changing.

Most of the staff interviewed had some clear ideas regarding the way they would like to see Eastern Hill operate but conceded that they had not managed staff issues as well as they could have in relation to the iontroduction of the project. They believed that the many of the rumours could have been quashed and staff anxiety reduced if they had provided more information at the outset and spent more time talking with staff directly rather than relying on line management who were not fully aware of all aspects of the project.

The Management and Health team was also concerned that other staff members, particularly the displaced Eastern Hill staff, would be extremely disappointed, angry and resistant to change. This would then impact on the morale of other staff particularly the newly appointed Eastern Hill Staff. Some went as far to say that the displaced staff might try and 'sabotage the program' and others said that the displaced staff would generally make life extremely difficult for the new staff and the institution as a whole.

All the respondents acknowledged that there was considerable pressure placed on staff at all levels and the clients. For the newly appointed Eastern Hill Staff, it was the pressure to 'succeed against the odds'. As one manager explained:

> We're putting a whole new group of people into a new unit, it has a reputation it does have some very difficult kids in there and they've got to work in there from day one really, so potentially there will be enormous pressure.

For the Management and Health team, it was the pressure to get the program up and running, endure 'ongoing staff resistance' and face the constant reality that if he project was unsuccessful it would be extremely difficult to convince staff to participate in innovative programs in the future. The clients would also be under pressure. They would have to adjust to a totally new system and maybe for the first time be accountable for their behaviour.

Several staff indicated that the new Eastern Hill staff might well experience numerous difficulties resulting from the demands of working such long shifts. They believed staff would experience exhaustion because the nature of their work would change considerably. It would be far more intensive and challenging. They also believed that that the project would suffer because the shifts meant that the two staff teams never had the opportunity to meet and discuss the project together.

The Management and Health team were absolutely convinced that there would be a range of positive outcomes flowing from the project dor the clients, the staff, the unit and the whole centre. Firstly, the interviewees thought that there would be a range of long term and short term benefits arising from the project for the clients. It was thought that clients would be made more accountable for their behaviour and there would be clearer and higher expectations made of them. They would also acquire new skills which would assist them in taking responsibility for their lives.

Secondly, interviewees had very positive expectations for the project in relation to the impact it would have on Eastern Hill. They saw the project as having the potential to reshape the unit, develop a new, exciting and more challenging culture and develop a new identity. They thought that the unit would become less violent and that the relationship between staff and clients would be much closer and meaningful:

Thirdly, the members of the Management and Health Team thought that the staff selected to work in Eastern Hill would gain both personally and professionally from being in the project. They would gain new skills, have the opportunity to work in a cohesive team and be recognised for their important work and contribution to the institution.

Fourthly, most of the interviewees believed that they would gain a lot personally from participating in the project. They explained that they would be challenged, gain new skills and gain a sense of satisfaction that they had done something in the institution that was important and would make a difference.

Finally, they were convinced that there would be numerous positive outcomes for the whole of the centre. They commented that this new way of working with young people 'would ripple through the whole centre' and there 'would be a greater understanding of the issues confronting clients families and communities'. Whilst it was acknowledged that the project had created a lot of fear and uncertainty for staff there were some positive signs that things were already changing. One member of the management team was so optimistic that she believed the most positive outcome of the project for her would be that a maximum security unit would no longer be required. She said:

> (I'm) dying for us to be able to say there is no maximum security in juvenile justice because we don't need it.

Staff Interview Themes

The 'existing' staff - those who had been employed at Eastern Hill before the new program, believed that they had been doing a good job and were bemused, even angry, at the closure of the old program. They believed that maximum security meant being very strict on clients and, while they had little information on the new program, there was a perception that it would be 'soft'. There was also a perception that the clients would resist the new program.

By contrast, the new staff were initially excited about being selected for the project and saw it as an opportunity for new professional growth. Prior to the program commencing they were unclear about the detail of the change but believed that it would address problems such as harsh punishments, especially the overuse of isolation, poor staff-client relationships and a lack of leadership.

Client Interview Themes

Prior to the commencement of the program, clients were unsettled by the prospect of change that they knew nothing about. However, they could see some point to change if it were directed at reducing their boredom and sense of powerlessness. They wanted to be able to work towards something. Discipine was also an area of concern - they wanted consistent discipline without so much reliance on isolation, but were not opposed to physical discipline when it was clear that was the most appropriate option. They wanted to retain the system of having a close relationship with at least one staffmember. Generally speaking, they would prefer the devil they knew to the new program that they did not know.

John Bergman Interview Themes

John saw his role as motivator of staff and facilitator of change in the clients. Before he began the training sessions he predicted resistance to change, not only from existing staff but from the clients and from the about-to-be-trained staff because they would take time to take on a team understanding of the vision for change. There were two elements to the change: cognitive and affective, and the interaction of these would be taught through problem-solving role plays of outside community situations. With creative staff the Eastern Hill unit would become a transforming environment for clients.

Observations by Researchers as Participants

Prior to the training session the research team visited the Eastern Hill unit on two occasions and spoke informally to staff and clients. The atmosphere in the Unit was tense and a feeling of despondency ever-present. Staff were clearly upset by the recent announcement that Eastern Hill was the Unit chosen for the new project. The clients seemed lethargic and lacked interest in anything that was going

on. The unit itself seemed dark and somewhat sterile. There were no interesting posters on the wall and the absence of books and magazines notable. The bedrooms were extremely tidy but graffiti were abundant. The researchers were shown the isolation room and told that it was rarely used. The young men seemed to spend a lot of time aimlessly hanging around the staff desk waiting for something to happen. The only activity in the unit focused on the TV, the Nintendo and the pool table. It seemed that the staff may have spent more time playing pool and Nintendo games than did the clients.

Meals were organised with military precision with strict rules enforced regarding how clients should enter the dining room, how they should collect their meal and where they should sit. Staff members did not sit together for the meal. It appeared that the relationship between the staff and clients was regimented and remote. Clients generally kept to themselves during meal times and rarely interacted informally with staff. Clients sat at particular tables in groups of two or four and these were structured around an informal hierarchy within the group. Some clients chose to sit away from others, aware that conversations could be overheard by staff.

During this period the researchers were shown around the institution and had informal discussions with members of the management and health teams. Their attitude to the project and the impending visit by John Bergman was in stark contrast to the feeling shown by the staff at Eastern Hill. They exuded a feeling of enthusiasm about the prospect. Their morale seemed very high.

During the training period, staff initially looked quite uneasy and unsure or sometimes bemused at what was happening. There were numerous occasions where some staff were clearly most uncomfortable. However, as time progressed they settled in and were clearly excited about the opportunity of doing something that was quite different to anything that they had done before. Many clearly enjoyed the break from routine duties and thought the sessions were good fun. As the training progressed it was obvious that many felt challenged by the ideas and activities that were offered by Bergman. For many, the sessions required them to think in a totally different way in relation to how they should think about themselves and how they should work with young people. The sessions also questioned their basic values and perspectives on the world. However, others were unsure and seemed hesitant to question or voice an opinion.

As team building activities got under way and people started to get to know each other it was evident that the task of building two teams of people was going to be a difficult one. Frustration started to loom and personality clashes began to develop. There were times that staff were clearly wondering when and how all the work they were doing was going to fit together in such a way as to provide the necessary skills for running Eastern Hill. The morale of the group waned from highs to lows, from being flat to being exuberant, from being exhausted to being full of energy, from being angry and frustrated to being happy and enthusiastic. For many it was an emotional roller coaster. However, it was evident throughout that staff felt valued and they had a contribution to make. They were obviously pleased, despite any reservations or anxiety they had about the project, they had been selected for the project and their competence had been both acknowledged and recognised by the institution. At a social get-together at the end of the formal training sessions numerous people made the comment that it was the first time that they had been invited to such an occasion by management. They were clearly quite chuffed.

No observation of the training sessions could be made without commenting on the pivotal role played by John Bergman. His energy, commitment, enthusiasm, determination, vision, his sense of humour, his stubbornness and his intensity were quite remarkable. Within the week he gained the support and respect of the participants who fondly nick-named him the 'Birdman'. The development of the training

sessions and strategies for dealing with the clients along with the planning for the new unit fell squarely with him. In many ways he developed guru status. He quickly became someone to whom staff constantly looked for approval, support and encouragement. For many, Bergman was the project and without him change within the unit was seen an impossible dream that could never be a reality. Others however, saw Bergman and his training as just the beginning of a long chain of events and procedures that collectively would bring change to the unit.

Stage Two: Implementation

Staff Interview Themes

Once the program began, the new staff started to have some doubts about their ability to implement the principles of negotiation. These doubts were fuelled by negativism from other units and some testing-out behaviour from clients. They felt unprepared for the demands of groupwork and the size of the workload. This led to exhaustion and stress. On the positive side, they were inspired by Bergman's training, the support from management and health staff, and they could see that clients were starting to trust their less 'macho' and more respectful approach.

Client Interview Themes

During the implementation phase, clients were still ambivalent about the new program. At least they knew where they stood under the old regime but now there was much more talking and far less 'punishment'. Groupwork and thinking reports came in for particular criticism because they took up too much time and made some clients uncomfortable. However, the new program did seem to reduce the number of fights in the unit and clients did seem to be seeing alternative perspectives on issues discussed at meetings and more reflective about their own behaviour. They liked the structure provided by the 'levels' of privileges within the unit.

John Bergman Interview Themes

John's prediction of client resistance was fulfilled at the beginning of the implementation phase and John took the lead in showing staff how to get clients to make connections between thoughts, feelings and actions. The prediction about staff resistance to new ways of doing things also came true with some staff leaving the program early and others followed due to exhaustion. But John was optimistic that maintining the commitment to changing client behaviour was top priority and even took precedence over vocational training programs for the future happiness of the the client and the security of the community.

Observations by Researchers as Participants

The research team visited the unit a week after the training sessions and found that unit was less regimented and somehow calmer than it had been on previous visits. Curtains no longer blocked out the light in the communal rooms and posters outlining the principles and sanctions of the unit now lined the once bare walls. Clients proudly displayed the beginnings of a collective mural which was being painted on the walls of the upper level of the unit. Furniture had also been rearranged to make space for group meetings and activities to be conducted in the communal room. The military precision of meal times had also been replaced by informal, yet structured rules outlining appropriate meal-time

behaviours. Clients and staff now sat around a large communal dining table often sharing stories or jokes with one another. We got the impression that although it was still early days and both clients and staff were still somewhat suspicious about the new changes, they were beginning to feel more at ease about interacting informally with each other.

Three group counselling meetings now structured the day and one got the impression that it was causing some discontent within the unit. Clients were clearly unhappy about having to attend these meetings and often it took an exorbitant amount of time persuading clients to stay in the same room, let alone participate. Clearly, some of the clients were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with group discussions and were intent on sabotaging them by any means possible. It was at these times that the unit took on an air of uncomfortable hostility and aggression. Staff often faced being verbally abused during meetings and often looked as distressed and confused about the nature and duration of the meetings as clients.

For many staff, organising and conducting group meetings was very new and many felt as if they had not yet possessed the skills necessary to effectively run a group. Although many were still enthusiastic about what they had learnt, some were now beginning to see that many of the processes and procedures would not be so easy to implement in practice. This was beginning to cause some concern, and even after a week some staff appeared to have lost some of the confidence they had gained, and were angry that Bergman had gone and left them in the lurch. It was obvious that this was the time when the stark reality of having to implement change was beginning to hit home for many of the staff. The exuberance and enthusiasm displayed in the training was being replaced by introspection and contemplation as many were beginning to see the reality of the tasks at hand.

A new and uniform approach was also being taken to discipline. Clients were no longer taken to the slot at the slightest altercation, rather, staff spoke to clients and attempted to explain why particular behaviours were inappropriate and suggested alternative ways of behaving. For some staff, who were used to relying on the slot as a method of controlling and punishing difficult clients, this was a perplexing period of transition. Although the concept of sanctions and consequences had been covered by Bergman in the training sessions, some felt unsure how to go about implementing them in practice. Because of this, staff were beginning to feel powerless and felt they now lacked the ability to effectively monitor and control the behaviour of clients. However, although staff felt that they were suffering more verbal abuse from the clients, the atmosphere in the unit seemed less hostile and aggressive.

Stage Three: Follow-up Training

Management and Health Team Interview Themes

At interview just before the follow-up training the management and health team were generally very positive in their comments about the program. Despite staff turnover, the need for more staff training, particularly in groupwork skills, those staff who had persevered had made great gains personally, for the clients and for the management of the unit. The changes in some clients were quite remarkable, and while the unit still had the maximum security tag, it was a much more harmonious place.

Staff Interview Themes

By Stage Three, just prior to the Bergman follow-up training, the main negative theme was concern over the differences in management style between the two shifts of custodial staff who were never

rostered together on the same day, and this caused poor communication between the two shifts. Additionally, there had been a considerable turnover of staff and this had increased the workload of the 'stayers' because they had to take on a training role as well as their other new duties. For new staff, the task of learning on the job caused them to sink or swim and it was felt that this affected levels of absenteeism and illness. But overall, staff felt that they were engaging much more constructively with clients than previously. With experience, group counselling work was becoming less stressful but preparation time and time to debrief with other staff would have improved levels of confidence and competence. Despite the limitations, Eastern Hill had become a better place to work, largely because it had a greater sense of purpose and staff felt they were having a constructive impact on the clients.

Client Interview Themes

By Stage Three, clients were reporting positive changes. The levels system continued to meet with approval, the discipline continued to be seen as too lenient, and groups were stiil too long and too frequent. However, most admitted to having changed into more reasonable, less impulsive persons and they were pleased about that, hoping they could maintain the change after release.

John Bergman Interview Themes

At interview just prior to his follow-up training sessions John again stressed the importance of changing the narrative going on in the heads of the clients (thoughts and feelings) leading to unlawful behaviour. He believed that some staff were not quite seeing this focus yet and were confusing his emphasis on physical restraint with softness rather than tough negotiation in the context of a respectful relationship. This would be the major theme for his follow-up training sessions.

Observations by Researchers as Participants

It was obvious that prior to the follow-up training, staff were exhausted, frustrated and disillusioned with the new project. The number of group meetings per day coupled with rising levels of physical and verbal abuse by clients was beginning to take its toll on many of the staff. Generally, staff looked despondent and seemed desperate to hold onto some of the original aims and objectives that had developed from the first training sessions. Some staff were feeling powerless to control the behaviour of clients and felt that because of this levels of verbal and physical abuse had increased. Staff were also under intense pressure from other staff in the Centre. The unit and its clients and staff were under constant scrutiny from others around them, who were waiting for the project to fail. Any incident or negative event in the unit was seen as an indication of failure and several staff reported jibes and comments from those staff in other units who considered that change within the Centre was an impossibility.

Clearly, staff morale was low and sick leave was not uncommon over the past few months in order to cope with the environment in the unit. There was a sense that things were starting to collapse and that generally the unit was losing its direction and goals. Some support time had been withdrawn by the Health Team and by the MJJC management, and some staff were of the opinion that they had been left to run the unit on their own. Some felt abandoned and voiced concern about the future of the project. Others were beginning to find it difficult to prepare and organise group meetings given the demands and commitments of the unit. Generally, staff felt that they had been placed under constant pressure to 'perform'. Lack of available time and resources also meant that the unit itself was becoming tardy and disordered. Posters had been ripped and hung on walls waiting to be replaced and furniture seemed in constant disarray.

Although there continued to be three group meetings per day, clients continued to fill in much of their day watching television or playing Nintendo. No other games, activities or resources such as books or art materials had been provided as discussed in the training sessions. During the times that the researchers visited, any suggestions regarding alternative activities were rare, and even when suggested, were generally looked upon with contempt or boredom by clients. Overall, clients generally displayed feelings of lethargy and boredom, and rarely displayed enthusiasm for anything in the unit. Clients spent less time in educational programs in order to provide more time for group meetings. However, several of the groups observed had questionable value and seemed to be used as a means of controlling 'difficult' young people. Although some of the clients were now participating in groups, and indeed some had even been responsible for running their own group meetings, many were clearly still uncomfortable with the idea. However, for some, group meetings were a time to air grievances, participate in the organisation and running of the unit, and to begin to discuss their offending behaviours.

It became obvious during these visits that some staff were beginning to challenge clients' negative behaviours. Although, at times this was met with physical or verbal abuse, it was clear that staff were beginning to be more supportive and encouraging of clients. In turn, clients were beginning to feel more comfortable speaking about personal issues and problems with staff. It appeared that some of the clients were becoming more self-reflective and were beginning to look at their own thinking and attitudes toward the unit and the community at large. A closer relationship between staff and clients had developed.

Despite these positive signs of progress, staff were looking forward to Bergman's second visit and the second training session. A majority of the staff had been struggling to implement the project and were looking to Bergman for further answers, support and encouragement. Some felt very positive about the changes that had taken place in the unit and were looking to Bergman for further direction. Others were angry with the project to date and felt that Bergman would be disappointed about the lack of progress that had been made. Either way, it was very clear that Bergman's overall impression and opinion of the nature and extent of the changes was paramount. Clients were also aware of Bergman's second visit and initially felt that they had to "behave" in the unit in order to show that the project was indeed beginning to work. Some were still suspicious of Bergman and were unsure about what would now take place. However, clients openly questioned the future direction of the project to Bergman and seemed to be more comfortable with airing their opinions about the changes that had taken place. Obviously though, both staff and clients felt the pressure of Bergman's second visit and for the first few days there was a sense of uncertainty about the future direction of the project.

Bergman's initial visits to the unit allowed him to gain some sense and understanding of the events and changes that had taken place within the unit whilst he had been away. This catch-up time also enabled both staff and clients to discuss key issues and problems that had arisen during this time. Feedback from these consultations then formed the basis and structure for the second training sessions. Initially, at the training sessions staff, seemed relieved to be away from the unit and the institution. There was a sense that these sessions provided a much needed reprieve. Staff were eager to discuss the changes in the unit over the past few months, but were unwilling to discuss some of the grievances that they had expressed to us. Unlike the first training sessions, these sessions were far more constructive, more focused and more practically orientated. The development of mission statements, practical strategies for change and individualised client levels, became the main focus of the sessions. Outcomes from the sessions were then developed into staff training packages and individual client booklets which were then used for staff and clients to refer to at a later date.

Generally, the impression during this period was that Bergman, staff and clients all worked together with a common goal and purpose. Unlike the first training sessions, staff were better equipped to deal with the process, were more skilled and consequently, felt more comfortable about being directly involved in implementing change. Staff now asked more questions not only of the project, but of the techniques and processes used in the training. Clearly, they were now more familiar with Bergman's personality and teaching style. They had also formed close working relationships with one another and had begun to develop a coherent working team which together enabled the training sessions to be more collectively focused and driven. Similarly, Bergman was now more familiar with the Centre in general, the culture of the unit, and its clients and staff, and because of this seemed to have a much better sense of what was needed to implement change.

Prior to the second training, staff had become disillusioned and could not see the changes that had taken place within the unit. Now, during these training sessions it became obvious to staff that the culture of the unit was indeed changing. For many, this provided a renewed sense of purpose and direction, as they could finally see that all their hard work was now starting to pay off. Staff seemed to gain a renewed sense of confidence and self-worth from these sessions and it became obvious that they now perceived their role in the unit, and in the Centre, in very different terms. Overall, there was a sense during this time of a renewed commitment to the aims and goals of the project.

The follow-up training sessions enabled both management and staff to evaluate the past few months and to develop further goals and initiatives. The sessions were also used to develop and formulate the Eastern Hill staff training package, Eastern Hill mission statement, the Anger and Violence Program and its guidelines regarding levels, and client information packs. Staff now had very clear and concise training manuals which they could refer to, and clients were now given information packages upon reception into the unit. Information regarding the structure, organisation and aims of the unit was now more readily available and this provided a sense of continuity and collectivity which had been lacking in the unit prior to the second training.

Overall, the impression at this time was of a renewed sense of direction and purpose. Many of the staff now felt better equipped to deal with the behaviours of clients and seemed to have a better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings behind new processes and procedures. Similarly, although many of the clients were now new to the unit, there appeared to be an acceptance and understanding of the project that had not been apparent before. Clients now asked more questions not only of themselves, but of others who entered the unit.

Stage Four: Analysis of Quantitative Data

The Moos Correctional Institutions Environment Scale

The Moos scale was originally developed in the USA by Rudolph Moos (1975). Institutional climate is defined by Moos (1975) as the way that the 'organisational context of correctional institutions may shape individual behaviour'. Moos' definition was intended to include not only each individual's private world but also the point at which this private world merges with that of others to form a common interpretation of events in which they participate. Such common interpretations may differ from those of a detached observer because the on-going interaction of the participants and their perceptions develops a dominant culture within the institution, and this is the prevailing institutional climate.

The Moos scale has never been validated in Australia and the lack of information about which items contributed to which sub-scales made it impossible to use the scale to full advantage of its claimed capacity for complex analyses of institutional climate. Due to the short time available to get the evaluation underway at the MJJC, the MOOS could not be piloted or validated but it was decided to use it as a potential source of additional data.

As the original Moos scale consisted of a long form (90 items) and a short form (36 items) which correlated highly with the long form, it was decided to use the short form. Subjects could score somewhere between plus 36 and minus 36. No score was allocated to 'Neutral' responses and the total number of minus responses for each Subject was deducted from his/her total number of plus responses to yield his/her score.

Despite some minor modifications to the original Moos, the MJJC scores showed potential for discriminating between the responses of different groups of Subjects at the Juvenile Justice Centre - clients, custodial staff, and management staff. The size of the sample suggests that caution should be used when discussing the outcomes, but further trials are recommended to establish whether it is possible to discriminate between the 'climate' of one unit which is undergoing a special program and another unit which is not.

The modified 36-item Moos was administered to all clients and custodial staff before the program commenced (April 1998), in the middle of the trial program (August 1998), and after completion of the trial period (December 1998). Management staff completed the modified Moos twice - before the program commenced and after completion of the trial program.

The scores for each category of Subject are recorded in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Moos Institutional Climate Scale - Mean Scores

	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
Clients	5.2 (N = 5)	3.1 (N = 7)	7.3 (N = 6)
Custodial Staff	12 (N = 7)	9.3 (N = 10)	12.5 (N = 12)
Manag't & Health	- 10.6 (N = 8)		21.2 (N = 5)

The small numbers of Subjects make it inappropriate to carry out tests of significance. The fact that the composition of each group changed to some extent between scale administrations also weakens apparent differences in score trends. However, more extensive use of the Moos in the future may validate observed trends. It appears that both clients and custodial staff rated the Eastern Hill climate more positively than negatively before commencement of the new program. This contrasts with management and health staff who tended to rate the climate far more negatively than positively prior to the commencement of the program. While these comparative differences are tentative, it can be noted that at interview both clients and custodial staff indicated some sense of security from the structure of the 'old regime'. For example, one client said:

> we used to get a biffing or locked up, now we have to talk with the group.

It is also apparent that both client and custodial staff ratings of the climate go down at the mid-program administration of the Moos, and this is consistent with the reported confusion created by staff turnover, for new staff in particular. They were far less sure of themselves and how to handle situations than in other units of the juvenile justice centre. For example, one staff said:

> staff at times believed they couldn't do it ... they felt unsupported by other units and other staff.

By the third administration of the Moos both staff and clients seem to be more comfortable about the unit with their mean scores being more positive than before the program began. Perhaps the teething problems had been ironed out, those staff who felt uncomfortable had moved on and John Bergman had been back to provide further staff training. Unlike the custodial staff group and the clients, the management group (including health staff) had seen no turnover so the people who rated the unit's climate at minus 10.8 before the program began were now rating it at plus 21.2, suggesting that the managers were well-pleased with the changes that had taken place in the intervening months. What they saw and felt was so different about the unit is not detailed in the Moos, and not even the interview data suggest such a huge swing in perception of climate change at Eastern Hill.

Incident Reports

Incident reports were collected and collated for the periods:

Stage One:
1. Six months prior to the project;
2. During the first training session;

Stage Two:
3. Six months after the initial training sessions;

Stage Three:
4. During the second training sessions;
5. Two months after the second training sessions.

Key variables were developed from the Incident Reports and data were consolidated to an Access database. Data were analysed in order to assess the seriousness and frequency of the incidents occurring and the nature of the response to the incident. These data were coded for the five periods listed above.

Data coded for these periods were compared in order to identify and assess any significant change in the frequency and nature of incidents, and responses to incidents. Accurate comparisons were difficult to make, however, as the reliability and validity of data prior to the commencement of the program may have been compromised by inconsistent recording and/or accidental destruction or loss or records.

There were no incident records for March 1998: instead data were drawn from isolation reports which were available. Again, the inconsistent and incomplete recording of information from these reports, has implications for the reliability of findings pertaining to incident frequency and indeed nature during the March 1998 period.

Significantly, John Bergman and members of the management team predicted a two-stage cycle to incident control. In the first instance, they predicted that initially, the frequency and reporting of incidents would increase. In particular, it was argued that assaults and self-harm type incidents would experience the most dramatic increase. However, it was also predicted that ultimately, over time, the frequency of incidents would decline as the ideas and methodologies advanced in staff and client training became more salient.

Overall, both predictions were found to be correct. In the six month period prior to the commencement of the training (October 1997 - April 1998) there were 21 incidents reported in the unit. Despite the first training period being incident free, in the six months after the training there were 53 incidents reported; an increase of 152 per cent. However, as predicted the number of incidents did begin to decline after the second training session. Six incidents were reported in the unit during the second training period, and a further 13 incidents were reported during the two months after this session.

Further, when data were analysed per month, some interesting results were found. The number and percentage of recorded incidents increased by 200 per cent from four incidents in April (1998) to 12 incidents recorded in May (1998), the month directly after the initial training period. Similarly, the number of recorded incidents also increased dramatically during September and October 1998, the month prior to and month including, the second training period. A majority of incidents (38.7%) occurred during these three months which was, as reported by staff and clients during interviews, a time of great change and stress for both staff and clients.

John Bergman and members of the management team also predicted that although the number of incidents would increase, the use of isolation as a method of discipline and/or punishment would decrease over time. One of the initial proposed outcomes of the program was that graduated discipline, utilising a range of consequences such as trust levels and privileges, would be used more often than isolation.

The results showed that in the six months prior to the commencement of the training, isolation was used as a form of response in 18 out of 21 incidents (86%). In the first six months after the initial training, however, isolation was only used 53 per cent of the time (28 out of 53 incidents). Similarly, during the second training period isolation was used as a response to incidents 66 per cent of the time, and in the two months after this training session was used as a response 46 per cent of the time. Even though the frequency of incidents did increase, the use of isolation as a response to these incidents decreased markedly after the first training period.

Furthermore, it was found that even when isolation had been used as a response, it was often used in tandem with a number of other disciplinary strategies such as counselling, group meetings, thinking reports, management reports, consequences and/or debriefing. In fact, isolation was rarely used on its own in response to a reported incident in the six months after the initial training (3.8%) and was not used at all as a singular response during the second training session or the two months following this period.

As well as changes in the frequency of incidents and use of isolation, data clearly revealed that there were variations in the type of incidents that were reported in the unit during the program. Although it is difficult to accurately comment on the period prior to training due to inconsistent and inaccurate data, results show that for this period, the majority of incidents reported were for verbal abuse, physical assault, or altercation, and the threatening of assault, between clients, and between clients and staff. However, during the six months after the initial training the type of incidents which were reported also included instances of contraband, absconding, drug overdose, property damage, threats of self-harm, and altercations between clients, and clients and staff. These findings do not necessarily mean however, that these incidents were more likely to occur during this period. They may reflect that staff did not report these types of incidents prior to the training. Further, these findings may also reflect that during this time, acceptable and unacceptable client behaviours were being redefined according to the new goals and objectives of the unit.

The findings also clearly show that during the six months after the initial training, the incidents of verbal abuse and/or physical, verbal assaults directed by clients toward staff increased dramatically. These findings confirmed statements made by staff during the second stage of interviews, that clients had begun to be more hostile and verbally aggressive toward them after the first training sessions. However, in the period after the second training session, there was only one incidence of altercation reported between a client and staff. This again confirmed reports by staff during the third round of interviews that the environment within the unit had become calmer and less aggressive since the second training session.

Staff Absences

Information regarding staff absences was collected and collated for the year 1998. Data were analysed per month and this was then used to assess staff absenteeism for the periods:

1. Three months prior to the commencement of the program;
2. Six months the commencement of the program, including the first training session;
3. Two months after and including the second training session.

It was found that during the three months prior to the commencement of the program the average number of staff absent per month was 15. However, during the first six months of the program the average number of staff absent from the unit rose to 33 absent days per month; an increase of over 100 per cent (Table 2). As shown in Table 2, the rate of staff absenteeism was highest for the months of June, September and November 1998. These figures confirmed reports by staff in both the second and third round interviews that staff absenteeism had increased since the training sessions, and that many staff were becoming sick as a result of the increased tension and workload within the unit.

Table 2. Number of Staff Absence Days by Month (1998)

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number Staff Absent Days	19	10	16	15	17	35	25	29	30	25	37	11

Table 2 shows that prior to commencement of project (20th April 1998) January had highest number of staff absentee days (n = 19).

After the commencement of project, the number of staff absent from duty almost doubled in June (n = 35) and again in November (n = 37).

During the four months prior to the commencement of the project, the average number of staff days absent was 15. During the six months after the commencement of the project, this figure rose to an average of 33 staff absentee days per month.

Although a majority of the unit staff had commented in the second stage of interviews that staff absenteeism was high, as shown above this was not reflected in official figures.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This evaluation is unusual in that it was undertaken at the request of the management of the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre and with a very high level of cooperation from all participants. There was ready access to recorded data as well as to participants. There was also a lot of goodwill from the evaluation team and a very large time commitment which evolved out of interest in the enormity of the task being attempted by the key players in the program. The evaluation is generally quite positive in its analysis of data and in the following conclusions and recommendations.

1. The chosen method of change

The chosen method of change was quite radical in that it relied on a facilitator to train staff quickly for a fresh start at doing maximum security in a more creative, thoughtful way - with an eye to future citizenship of the clients as well as an eye on past misdemeanors and related expectations of bad behaviour. What had to change was the predictability and pointlessness of penalties. Old practices die hard, so a completely new approach had risks attached to it. The chosen method of change - to provide an environment which facilated clients to re-think and re-feel their characterisic reactions to perceived difficult situations meant that staff interaction with clients and the management of the unit would also have to change - in fact would have to change before clients could be induced to risk changing their own stereotypical behaviour.

The chosen method was a 'crash through or crash' approach which seems to have been largely successful after twelve months, although not without struggles and not without some staff casualties on the way. This may have been inevitable as change always brings resistance. However, it is not known whether alternative approaches were considered or how the chosen method became the preferred option. The return of the facilitator to assist in reviewing progress of the new approach indicates a caring style of institutional management. However, the evaluators wonder how long an imposed change will last without continual defence and perennial resistance.

It is therefore recommend that the progress of the new program be monitored on an on-going basis, involving staff and clients.

It is further recommended that any future innnovation have a longer lead-in time so that a wider ownership and support base can be developed and maintained.

2. Resourcing change

Apart from hiring the facilitator, it appears as if the program was resourced from existing provision, placing staff under some pressure. Driven by the desire to succeed in implementing the change, the staff involved seemed prepared to go beyond the call of duty. Those who stayed, braved the additional pressures well, but felt abandoned at times particularly when the going got tough for a while after the motivator left and then again when the health staff left.

It is therefore recommended that any future innovation be adequately costed and resourced before implementation, this costing to include the implementation phase and on-going program support needs.

3. The process of change

The process of change seems to have taken place as predicted with initial excitement and apprehension from selected staff and strong resistance from clients. This was followed by a period of staff confusion then a period of consolidation and acceptance, and even pride amongst some clients that they were becoming more reasonable and less impulsive persons. Staff also became generally more acquainted with the intense focus on client change and were heartened by pleasing, if long-awaited in some cases, responses from many clients. This was an outstanding outcome given the limited amount of training provided for staff and the absence of the facilitator for most of the implementation phase. However, the process of change will continue to be difficult not only because of the type of client but because of what is being asked of them and of staff. Training of new staff and re-training of existing staff will continue to be a requirement of the demanding program. Groupwork skills are an obvious need as this is the primary strategy for change and is very difficult to learn unsupervised on the job.

It is therefore recommended that staff training be an integral part of the job requirement and that all staff have supervised training and regular opportunity for evaluation and feedback on their performance as group leaders.

4. Unit management change

There are some aspects of the management of the unit which could do with attention. Firstly, the staff workload appears to have increased and this will make life particularly difficult for creative management of periods when there is little positive feedback from clients. Staff morale may go down and this is very hard to retrieve once the downward spiral starts. Secondly, there is a problem of lack of consistency in management between the two shifts - one is seen by clients as 'easy' and the other as 'hard'. This allows clients to play one against the other and blurs the focus of their task which is to change their behaviour. Thirdly, within each shift there is insufficient time for staff communication. There needs to be preparation time and reflection time if individual plans for clients are to be effectively and efficiently implemented. Related to this is the conduct of the group meetings. Groupwork requires high concentration and creativity for maximum effectiveness. This is difficult under the present staffing arrangements. If there were one obvious response to all of these management issues, it would be to shorten the length of the shift.

It is therefore recommended that the length of shifts be reduced from twelve hours to eight hours and that allocations of time for work tasks be reviewed within the framework of the new shift arrangements.

5. Evaluating change

The current evaluation was conducted happily on less than a shoestring. Feedback has been provided along the way so most of the participants have not only had qualitative in-put into the report but also access to reflections of the evaluators. What may have been even better would have been an action-research approach in which an evaluator participated from the outset and chaired regular feedback sessions of participants at which they would re-assess their short and long-term goals, the extent to which they were achieving their expectations, and what should happen next. If program improvement is the aim, then regular re-assessment, rather than a report after one year, will facilitate the achievement of program goals in a documented and efficient manner.

It is therefore recommended that future program innovation adopt an action-research model for evaluation.

In the light of the program goal that pro-social change in client connections between thoughts, feelings and actions extend beyond the institution phase, it is further recommended that the evaluation continue into the post-release phase.

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The Youth Research Centre

The Youth Research Centre is located at The University of Melbourne. It was established in 1988 in response to a recognised need by the youth affairs sector for relevant and up to date research on the issues facing young people today.

As part of a university, the Youth Research Centre draws on the research skills, knowledge and experience of senior academic staff.

The aims of the YRC are to:

- conduct relevant, coherent and reliable research on young people in Australia, with a state, national and international focus;
- assist with the development of policy and the implementation of initiatives based on research findings;
- develop strong links with the youth affairs sector, with particular attention to helping to identify and address the sector's research needs;
- facilitate communication between educators, researchers, policy makers and youth workers;
- support research activities of university staff and post-graduate students who have a specific interest in youth affairs; and,
- enhance the professional development of staff and students by assisting them to be informed about the broader context of young people's lives.

Youth Research Centre Activities

The YRC has particular expertise in research on education, transition pathways, social justice, gender equity and employment issues as they affect young people.

The main YRC activities are:

- undertaking research and publishing the outcomes in a manner accessible to policy makers and the youth sector;
- providing information and policy advice to governments and other organisations;
- assisting and encouraging individuals or groups who work with young people.

YRC activities involve:

- undertaking small projects for groups lacking the capacity or opportunity to do so themselves;
- providing a base for post-graduate students wishing to undertake Masters or PhD research on topics related to young people and the youth sector;
- enabling academics to participate in established YRC projects, and/or undertake their own research on youth related issues;
- maintaining a youth sector resource library;
- publishing series of Working Papers and Research Reports;
- conducting public seminars and conferences on a variety of issues relevant to those working in the youth sector.

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